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Nroogd Samhain, 1987

A Cymro-Norse Ritual

Leigh Ann

TOOLS:

- Drinking Horn
- Hammer (Mjollnir)
- Sword
- Pentacle/Stone
- Bowl of Salt
- Water
- Censer & Incense

CELEBRANTS:

- White Priestess (Skadi)
- Gold Priest (Freyr)
- Red Priestess (Freyja)
- Red Priest (Heimdallr)
- Black Priestess (Vala)
- Black Priest (Odin)

Procession, consisting of Soulers (any small number) and White Mare.

Skadi takes the sword around the circle with these words:

> Sharp bright steel the circle scribes;
> carving, cleaving world from world.

Freyja banishes the circle with the hammer and these words:

> Mankind's friend, by mjollnir's might
> banish beings that bode us ill!

She stands in the center and to each quarter and above and below she makes the Hammer-Sign, saying,

> Holy hammer, hallow and hold us.

Vala seals the circle, carrying pentacle and bowl of salt, saying,

> Stout stone shield us, shut the circle.

Skadi asperses the circle (Vala follows with censer) with these words:

> Be all bless'd who bide herein,
> by stone and sea, by storm and sun.

Now Heimdallr takes the sword and calls the quarters as follows:

> Wisdom's wain, east wind I call thee!
> thoughts thy thanes that thrive in newness.
> Breathe and bless, blow all clean;
> watch and ward, o wind of mind.

> Summer's savor, south wind come now!
> Bright the blessings you bear with you.
> Strong of spirit, sun-like fire;
> watch and ward, o wind of soul.

> Wild and wet, west wind I summon!
> Sea-spray bearing, singing, shouting;
> beats the earth's blood in thy breast;
> watch and ward, o wind of heart.

White with winter, north wind, waken!
Stone's strength bringing, snow-cloaked wind.
From the frost-realms, fresh and chill,
watch and ward, o wind of form.

The Priestesses and Priests stand opposite each other, and each one of the pair invokes the other, as follows:

Skadi (to Freyr)

Lord of life, hail land-master!
God of grain that grows and dies
and rises reborn, full of richness;
fallow fields shall yet be fertile -
spring sap runs as stirs your phallus -
bless barren earth, let it bear again!

Freyr (to Skadi)

Show-shoes striding, hail swift huntress!
Wild one, free and willful goddess,
bow and blade you bear beside you,
finding food to fend off hunger.
Winter will not leave us wanting;
give good hunting, grant us skill!

Freyja (to Heimdallr)

Standing steadfast, hail far-seer!
Watchful one, on rainbow waiting,
horn at hand to rouse the heroes,
news you know from nine worlds over.
People's parent and our patron,
open our eyes to altered sight.

Heimdallr (to Freyja)

> Vanir bride, hail vision-giver!
> Capped in cat-fur, cloaked in feathers,
> drumming for the dance of dreams,
> you haste to hunt out hidden things.
> Scant now the screen that hinders sight;
> let us learn the lore of trance-work.

Vala (to Odin)

> One-eye, wanderer, god of wisdom,
> hunt-lord, hail, who leads the hosting!
> Nine nights hanging, knowledge gaining,
> cloaked at crossroads, council hidden.
> Now the night, your time is near us -
> right roads send us on, rune-winner.

Odin (to Vala)

> Every age your eye has witnessed,
> cauldron-keeper; hail, wise crone!
> Rede in riddles is your ration -
> wyrd-weaving at the world-tree's root.
> Eldest ancient, all-knowing one,
> speak secrets to us, send us kenning.

Odin reminds everyone what the festival is about, as follows:

Odin:

> So comes the souls'-day. Summon for feasting
> ancestors, ancients, honored and blessed;
> let in beloved ones, lend them your bodies -
> whom do you hallow? Hail them by name!

Allow a few minutes for everybody to name the ancestor they want to welcome. Then Vala gives this admonition:

Vala:

> As ancient elders you learn from and honor,
> let not the living ones moulder alone.
> Near is their knowledge nearer than spirits',
> seen without ceremony, simply for asking.

Both:

> Grandmothers, grandfathers, great be their blessings
> past ones and present we dance them all power!

All the Celebrants but Heimdallr form a circle facing outward; Heimdallr goes to the West, and all say:

> Wide are the worldgates; now the wights wander.
> welcome within are the dead who were ours;
> rest from riding here, revel and feast here;
> come in, old kinsfolk, keepers of wisdom!

Heimdallr cuts the Soulers' Procession into the Circle on "Come in", and moves to stand with the other Celebrants while the Soulers dance slowly around singing:

> Welcome winter, waning season,
> now with night the new year comes;
> all who honor elder kinsfolk
> dance the dead to earthly drums.
> Souls respected safeguard living
> house we'll hold, and hallow hearth;
> blessings be on those who bide here,
> and indeed on all the earth!

The Celebrants begin also to circle, dancing in character, starting widdershins then spiraling in and out to end deosil, as in the meeting dance, while the Soulers encourage the outer circle to dance also. The intent should be for luck in the new year, and better connection with our Ancestors (as well as better treatment of our Elders!). WE ARE THE OLD PEOPLE, and BLOOD OF THE ANCIENTS are appropriate and may be sung in polyphony

As the providers of food, FREYR and SKADI bring forward the feast. Some food should be laid out for the ancestors, and people should be encouraged to let the ancestors use their senses for a while to enjoy the food with them. The Soulers in particular should receive Soul Cakes. A strong magical gesture would be for people to bring forward canned and other non-perishable food (which can be later given to a food bank or similar organization).

Freyr speaks as follows:

> Cakes to us carry, corn from the storehouse;
> wine defies winter, warm with caught ripeness;
> milk made to cheeses, meat dried and salted;
> last of the land's fruits ere the long sleep.

Skadi speaks as follows:

> Good nuts and game-food are hunters' guerdon;
> sleeping earth's secrets yield to the seeker
> true buried treasure: onions, potatoes
> forest shall feed us while the fields rest.

Both say (if there is to be food donation):

> All who have aught to offer, now bring it;
> wights, bear ye witness work with the givers.
> Feeding our fellows, let us be fed so,
> sops for the spirit or sup for the flesh.

[If there is to be scrying and divination, it should be done now in a quiet space marked off as separate from the feasting-place. FREYJA and HEIMDALLR lead the scrying and VALA and ODIN lead rune-work, with the following optional speeches:

Heimdallr:

> Let the lots tumble, loosing their learning;
> word-wood and wit-stones, won through ordeal.
> Come up and cast them, while word is clearest
> augers may answer aught the year holds.

Freyja:

> Wide are the worldgates, windows are open;
> sights may be seen now, elsetimes but scarcely.
> Crystal and cauldron capture the vision;
> mystery's meaning speaks to the mindful.]

Note: it is entirely appropriate for partying to go on inside the sacred circle (people can get up and move around), so that the Dead have the opportunity to enjoy their day before we bid them farewell; the circle should be cast large, with this in mind. The only constraint is to open in sufficient time to clean up the hall before the rental time runs out. The circle is opened as follows:

Heimdallr:

> To watching winds, we wish fair wandering;
> fan us sweet fragrance; hail, farewell!

ALL:

> To sleepless souls, we wish sweet resting;
> friends will keep faith; farewell now!

> Gods and goddesses, go with praises!
> Finished our festival; hail, farewell!

Celebrants ground with this formula:

> As from the earth our energy comes,
> into the earth the excess flows;
> earth and all empowered alike
> be it so!

Skadi:

> See: the circle is severed thus [she cuts]
> merry meet, merry part, merry meet again!

B*B
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